



H.Con.Res. 287 – Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United States Explorer I satellite, the world's first scientific spacecraft, and the birth of the United States space exploration program

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Con.Res. 287 is being considered on the House floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Mark Udall (D-CO) on January 29, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Science and Technology on January 29, 2008, but was never considered.

H.Con.Res. 287 is expected to be considered on the House floor on February 6, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Con.Res. 287 resolves that the Congress:

- Celebrates the achievement of the late Dr. James A. Van Allen and his science team and all of the individuals at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Army Ballistic Missile Agency who, through the successful launch of Explorer I, brought the United States into the space age and science into the realm of space;
- Supports science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education programs, which are critical for preparing the next generation to lead future United States space endeavors;
- Recognizes the role of the United States space program in strengthening the scientific and engineering foundation that contributes to United States innovation and economic growth; and
- Looks forward to the next 50 years of United States achievements in the robotic and human exploration of space.

BACKGROUND

January 31, 2008, marks the 50th anniversary of the launch of Explorer I, which was the first United States satellite to be successfully lofted into space, and the world's first scientific satellite. Explorer I was officially known as Satellite 1958 Alpha, and was sent aloft as a part of the United States program for the International Geophysical Year of 1957-1958.

Explorer I was designed and built by Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology under the direction of Dr. William H. Pickering. Dr. James A. Van Allen of the University of Iowa and his science team designed and built the satellite's instrumentation. Explorer I was launched from Cape Canaveral (now Cape Kennedy), Florida, by the Jupiter-C vehicular missile, designed, built, and launched by the Army Ballistic Missile Agency.

STAFF CONTACT

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